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STAR WARS™ DOCTOR APHRA

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APHRA

Book I, Part III

It is a period of opportunity. In a galaxy oppressed by the cruelty of Imperial forces, there is little hope for the future. But for those used to operating on the fringes, there is much potential for profit.

Rogue archaeologist Aphra is back to doing what she does best: locating and liberating rare artifacts. By her side are a pair of homicidal droids and Wookiee bounty hunter Black Krrsantan, looking to collect on Aphra's debts.

Aphra's plans are suspended when her doctorate is temporarily revoked – on a tip-off from her estranged father. Now, in order to regain her stature, Aphra is forced to go along on his foolish search for a spiritual sect on an isolated moon. But when they arrive, enlightenment is nowhere to be found – instead, the moon is crawling with Imperial forces....

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Yavin 4.
GGKRKKKKH!
YEAH, KRRSANTAN. A FEW PLATOONS. THAT DOES MAKE GETTING INTO THE MASSASSI TEMPLE A LITTLE TRICKIER.
THEY MUST STILL BE CLEANING UP AFTER THE REBELS LEFT...
SERIOUSLY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'VE MISSED. THERE WAS A REBEL BASE ON YAVIN 4?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T REALLY FOLLOW CURRENT AFFAIRS.

THE BATTLE OF YAVIN.
I'M AFRAID YOU'VE LOST ME.

DEATH STAR WENT BOOM-BOOM.

THE... DEATH STAR?
I'M SORRY... I THOUGHT THAT WAS JUST A STORY.
YEAH.

TALK OF A PLANET-DESTROYING MACHINE ONE DAY AND THE NEXT IT'S GONE? I JUST DIDN'T GIVE IT MUCH THOUGHT.
IF I CAME TO YOU TALKING ABOUT SOME MANNER OF PLANET-DESTROYING MACHINE, YOU'D CALL ME A FANTASIST...
IT WAS *REAL?*

YEAH. IT REALLY *DESTROYED* ALDERAAN.
AND YOU'RE OBSESSED BY THE JEDI! DID YOU REALLY BUY THAT STORY ABOUT JEDHA?

NO! LOSING THE TEMPLE OF KYBER IN A SENSELESS ACCIDENT WAS TRAGEDY ENOUGH. THAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE DELIBERATELY WAS UNIMAGINABLE.
I...I WAS PULLING THE FINAL ELEMENTS TOGETHER ON THE ORDU ASPCTU. I WAS SO BUSY.
I DIDN'T REALIZE.
MILLIONS WERE TURNED TO DUST.
AND YOU JUST...

DIDN'T

NOTICE?

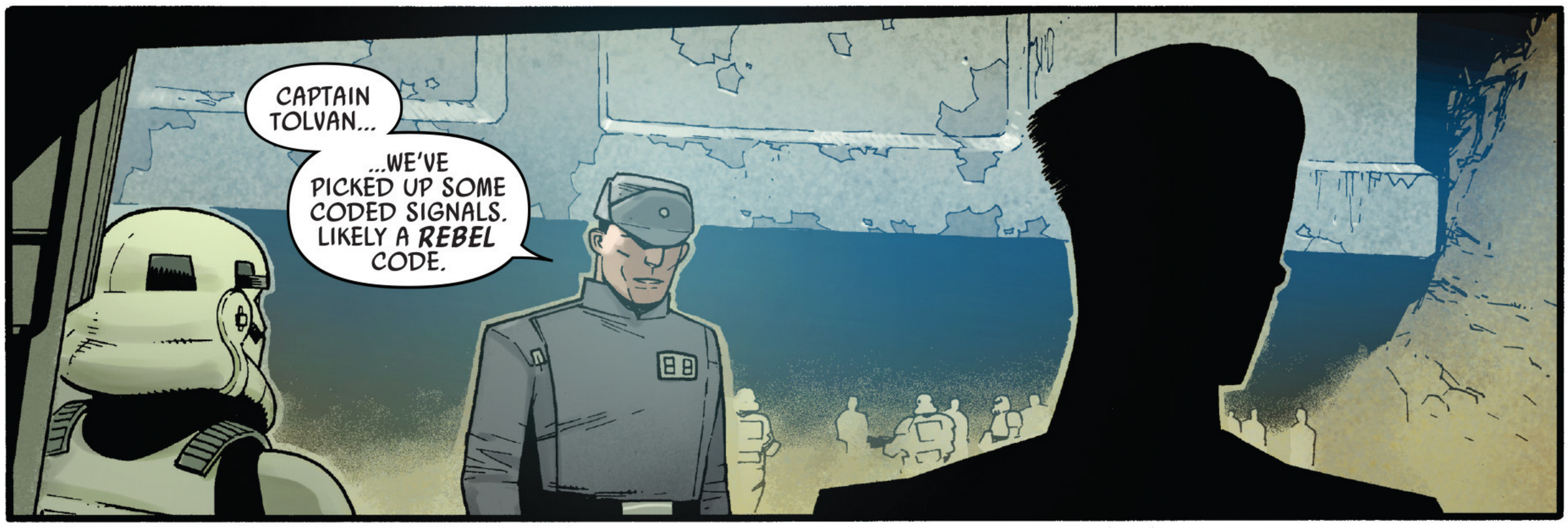
EXCUSE ME, MASTER APHRA...

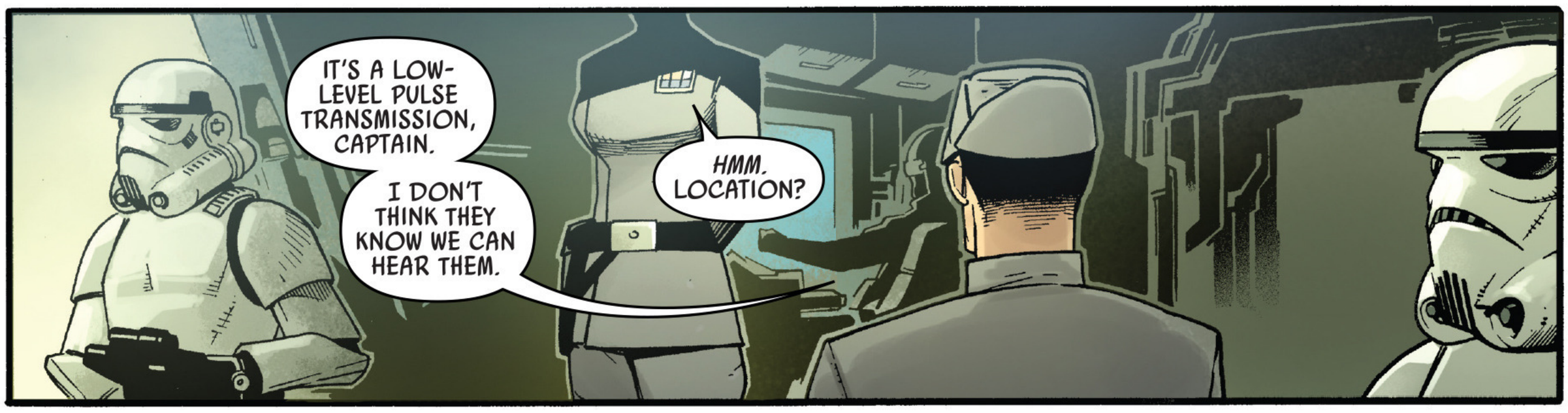
...DON'T YOU SUPPORT THE EMPIRE'S STEEL GLOVE CLASPING AROUND THE THROAT OF THE UNIVERSE AS THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT PEOPLE?
I DO BELIEVE THAT'S AN OPINION I'VE HEARD YOU EXPRESS.

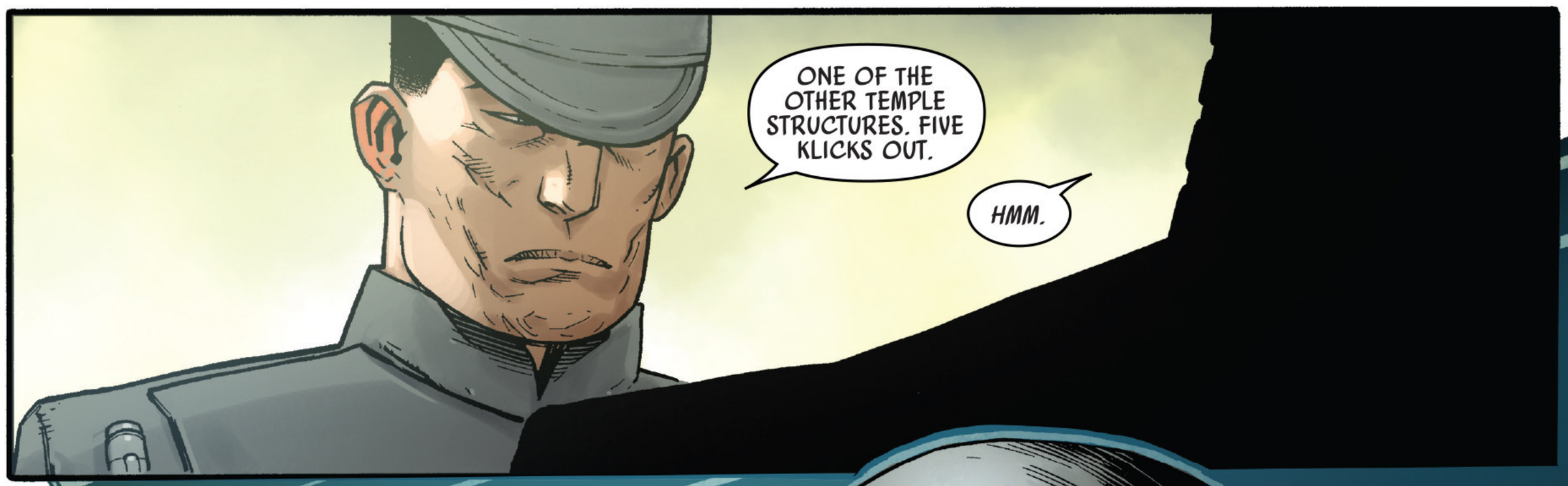
TRIPLE-ZERO.
IF I WAS INTERESTED IN MORAL INSTRUCTION FROM AN EMOTIONLESS KILLER, I'D HAVE KEPT WORKING FOR DARTH VADER.

YOU... WORKED FOR DARTH VADER?
HADN'T YOU HEARD? OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU DON'T KEEP UP ON CURRENT AFFAIRS.

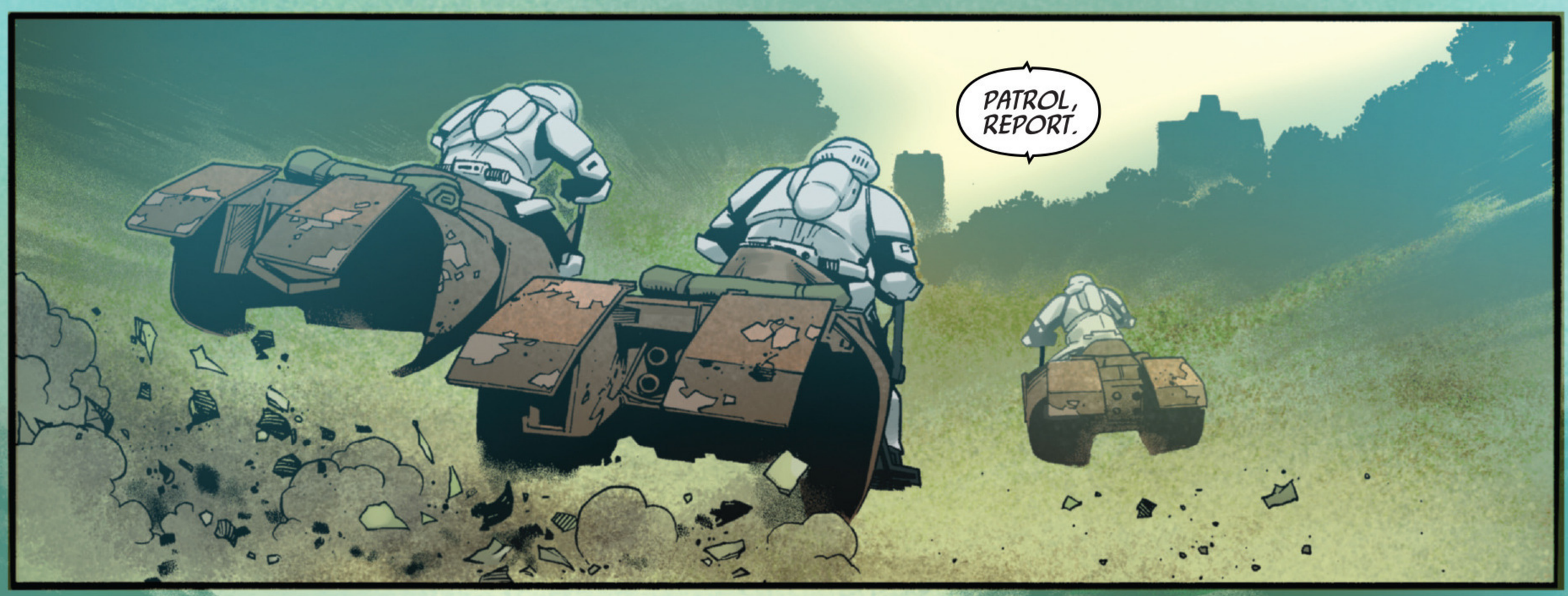
OKAY.
THIS IS WHAT WE'LL DO.


CAPTAIN TOLVAN...
...WE'VE PICKED UP SOME CODED SIGNALS. LIKELY A REBEL CODE.


IT'S A LOW-LEVEL PULSE TRANSMISSION, CAPTAIN.
I DON'T THINK THEY KNOW WE CAN HEAR THEM.
HMM. LOCATION?


ONE OF THE OTHER TEMPLE STRUCTURES. FIVE KLICKS OUT.
HMM.

SEND OUT A SPEEDER PATROL ON A STANDARD ROUTE, AND THEN CHANGE COURSE TO APPROACH THE SIGNAL.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN SPOT ANYTHING WITHOUT ALERTING THEM. PUT EVERYONE ELSE ON STANDBY.


PATROL, REPORT.

APPROACHING THE TEMPLE, CAPTAIN.
NOTHING TO--
WA--
BADOOM

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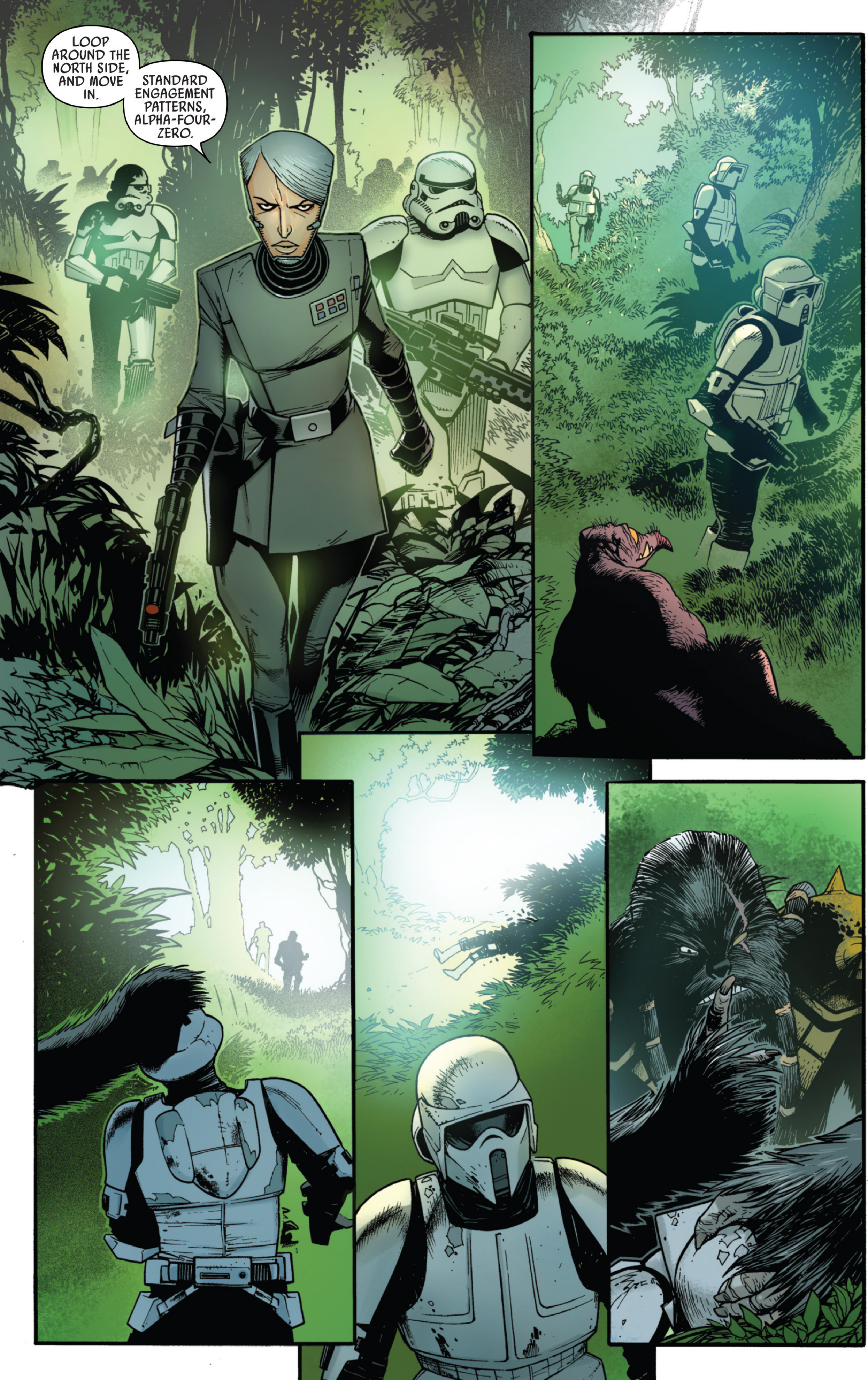
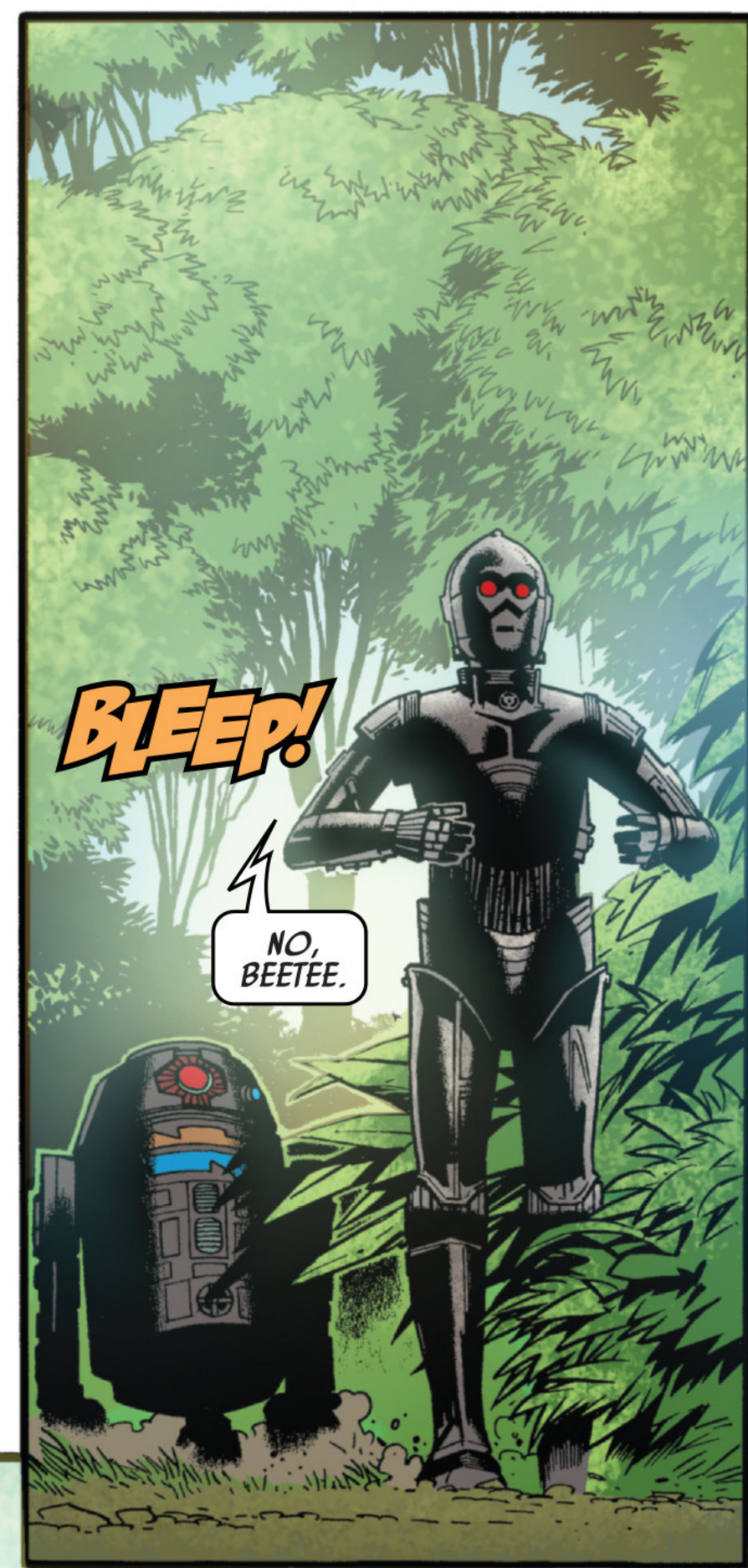
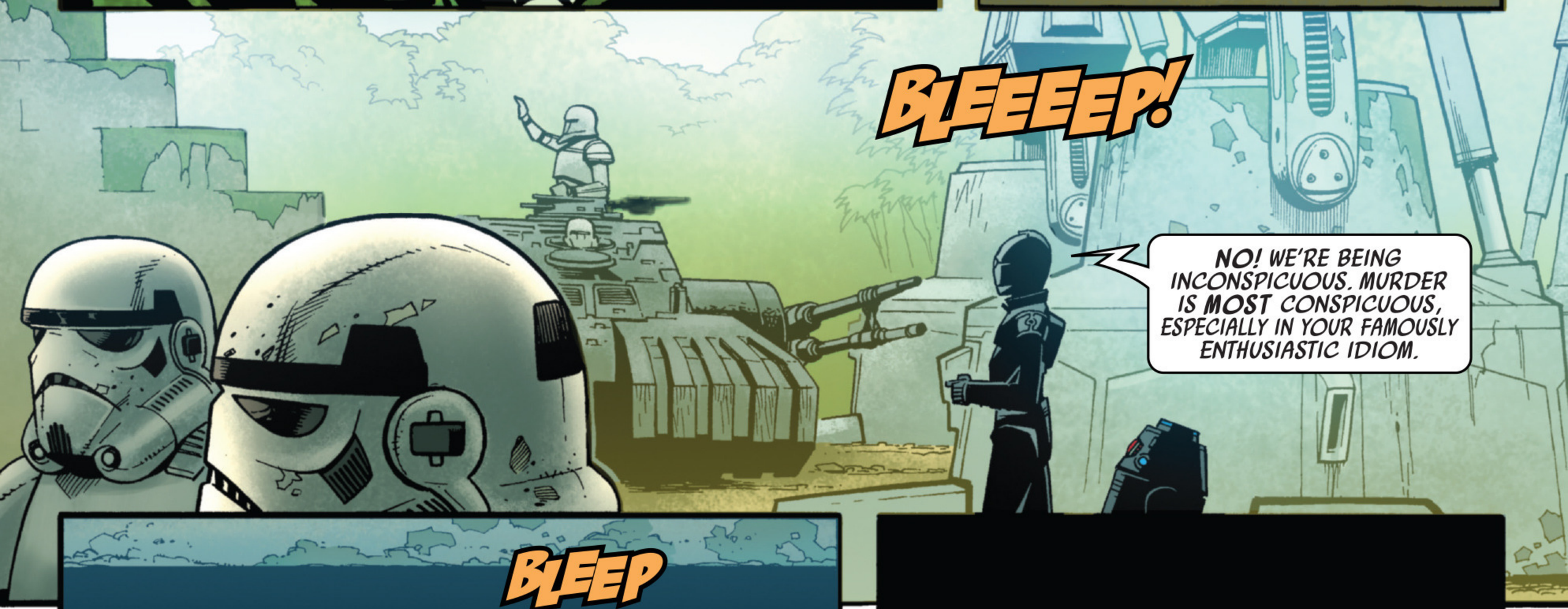
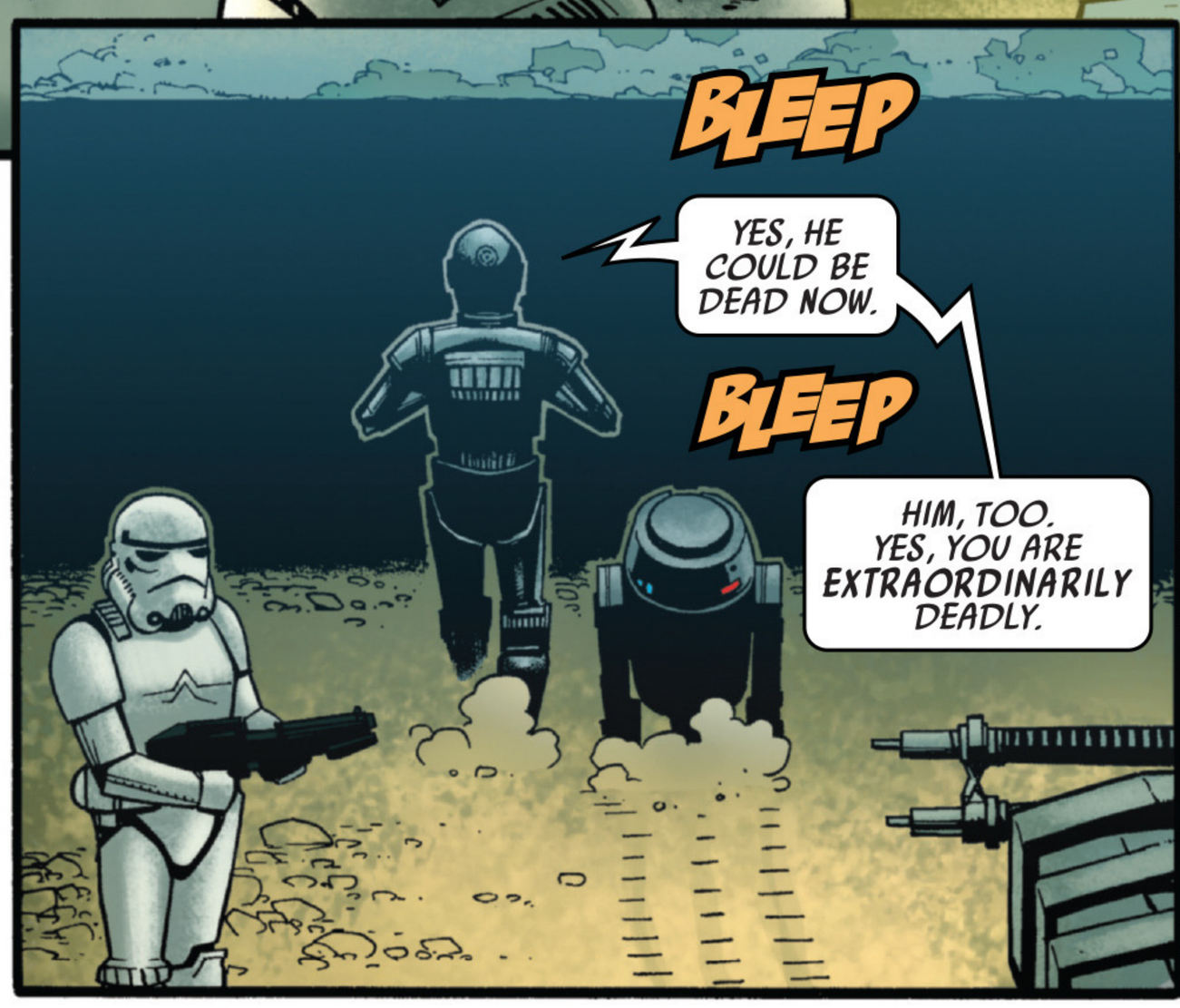
FULL COMBAT ENGAGEMENT.
NOW!
WELL, THERE'S OUR DISTRACTION.
THE WOOKIEE VERSUS WHATEVER THE EMPIRE CAN THROW AT HIM?
THAT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR.
NO, IT DOESN'T...


LOOP AROUND THE NORTH SIDE, AND MOVE IN.
STANDARD ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS, ALPHA-FOUR-ZERO.

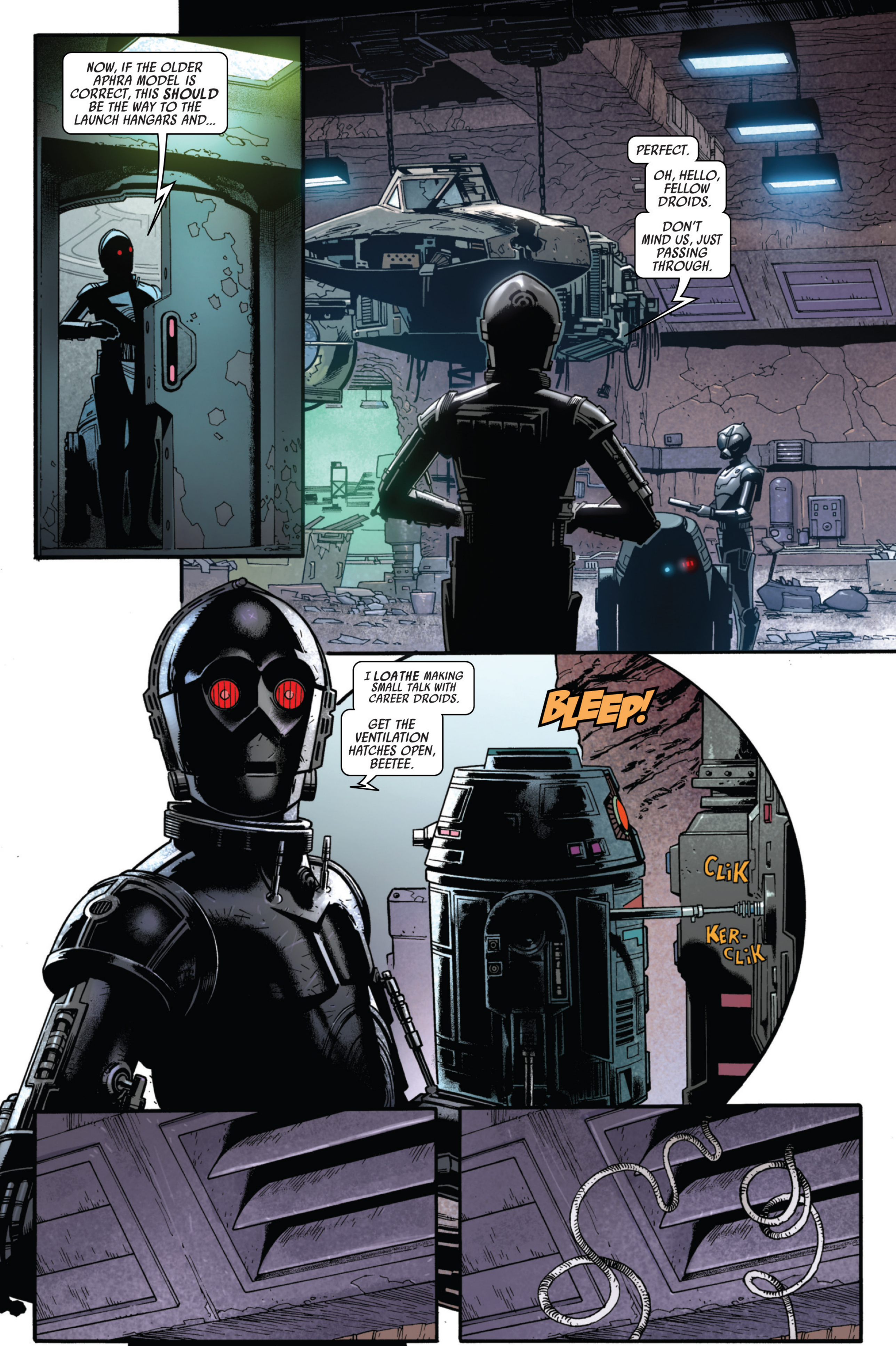
...BUT THE EMPIRE IS ALWAYS RECRUITING. I'M SURE THEY'LL RECOVER.
HEY, DROIDS. YOU'RE UP!


BLEEP!
NO, BEETEE.


BLEEEEP!
NO! WE'RE BEING INCONSPICUOUS. MURDER IS MOST CONSPICUOUS, ESPECIALLY IN YOUR FAMOUSLY ENTHUSIASTIC IDIOM.


BLEEP
YES, HE COULD BE DEAD NOW.
BLEEP
HIM, TOO. YES, YOU ARE EXTRAORDINARILY DEADLY.

YOU ARE A VERY NEEDY PSYCHOPATH, BEETEE.


NOW, IF THE OLDER APHRA MODEL IS CORRECT, THIS SHOULD BE THE WAY TO THE LAUNCH HANGARS AND...
PERFECT.
OH, HELLO, FELLOW DROIDS.
DON'T MIND US, JUST PASSING THROUGH.
I LOATHE MAKING SMALL TALK WITH CAREER DROIDS.
GET THE VENTILATION HATCHES OPEN, BEETEE.
BLEEP!
CLIK
KER-CLIK

CHELLI!
THIS IS...A MASSASSI PIECE, RIGHT? YOU HAD IT AROUND THE HOUSE.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PLANNING THIS, DAD?
SINCE I KNEW THE UNIVERSE NEEDED SAVING.
IT'S MY LIFE'S WORK.

BOOOOM
BOOM
WE'RE LOSING TROOPS, CAPTAIN. THEY'RE PICKING US OFF AT WILL. PINNED DOWN.
THERE MUST BE DOZENS OF THEM.
VERY WELL.
SEND IN A WALKER.
NO RESISTANCE YET...
WAIT...
SIGHTING. IN PURSUIT.

MISSED.

CLOSING IN...

BOW

BRRW

BDOOM

KRAK

SCROOOAAHH

CONTACT. WE HAVE--

ARGRGH! AGGGH!

HHZHZZZZ--

BUT WHAT IF THERE ARE GUARDS? WHAT DO WE--

TRUST ME. DON'T BE TOO DISAPPOINTED IN YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT I'VE DONE THIS KIND OF THING BEFORE.

OH HELLO, IT-O.

BIG FAN OF YOUR WORK.

WHICH WAY NOW?

SHOULD BE ALONG HERE. IT'S SITUATED ABOVE THE MAIN HALL, BELOW THE SUMMIT.

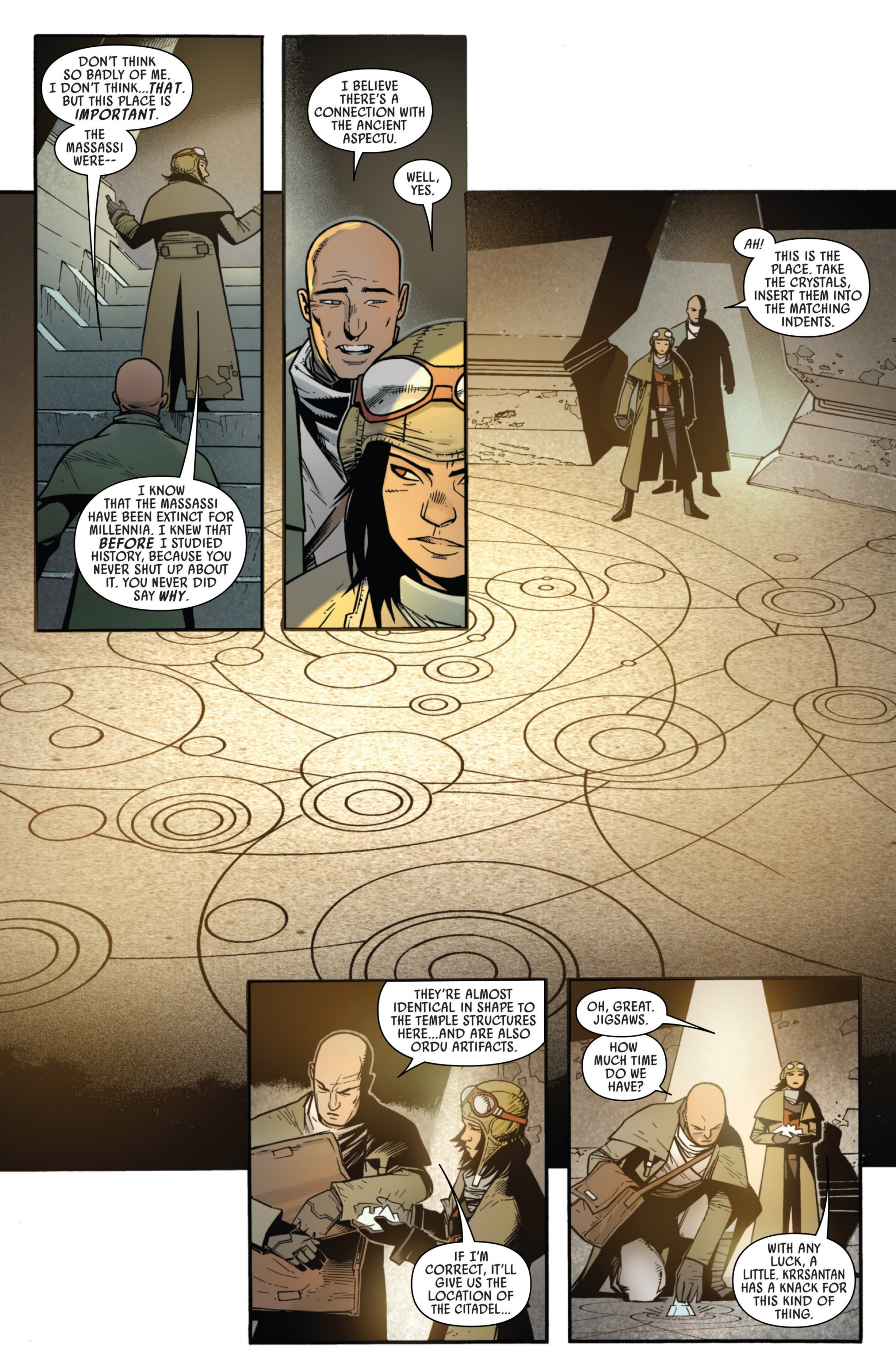
FASCINATING HISTORY--THE STRUCTURE, OF COURSE...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE REBELS SET UP BASE HERE. IT'S SUCH AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL SITE.

IMAGINE IF THE DEATH STAR HAD DESTROYED THE MOON.

IT'D BE SUCH AN INCREDIBLE LOSS.

YES, BECAUSE IT'D BE MUCH BETTER FOR PEOPLE TO EXPLODE *WITHOUT* TAKING DOWN POSSIBLE RESEARCH MATERIAL WITH THEM.



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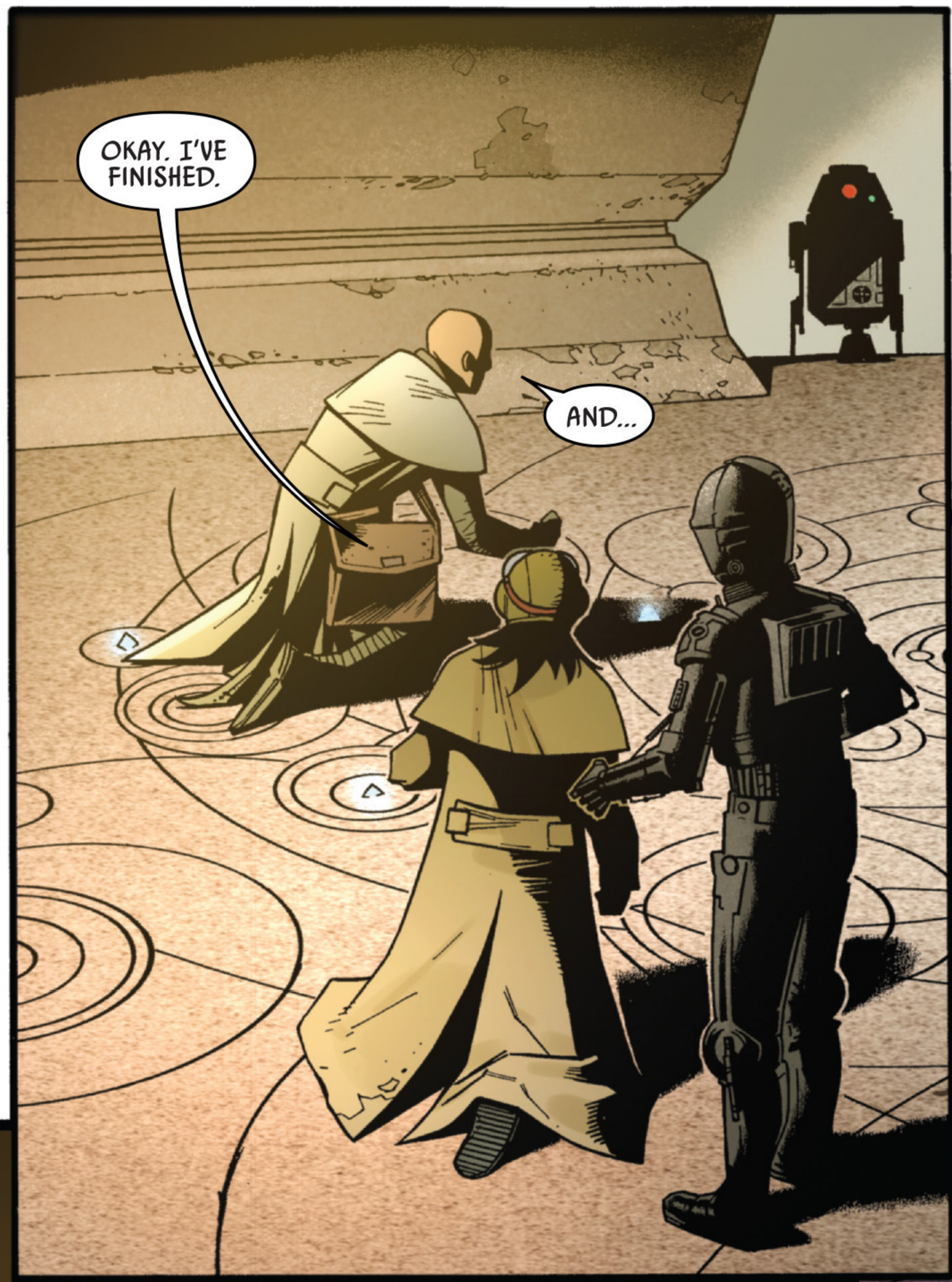
LOCATED THE WALKER. DISABLED.
LOOKS LIKE DAMAGE FROM HOSTILE MEGAFAUNA.
ANY SURVIVORS?
NEGATIVE.
WAIT, THE SCOUT IS MISSING ITS--
BUHDOOM
BUHDOOM
BUHDOOM


OKAY. I'VE FINISHED.
AND...

COMPLETE.
KLiK

HMM. IF YOU DON'T MIND ME OFFERING AN OPINION, THIS MASSASSI ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVENTURE HAS PROVED TO BE SOMEWHAT ANTICLIMACTIC.

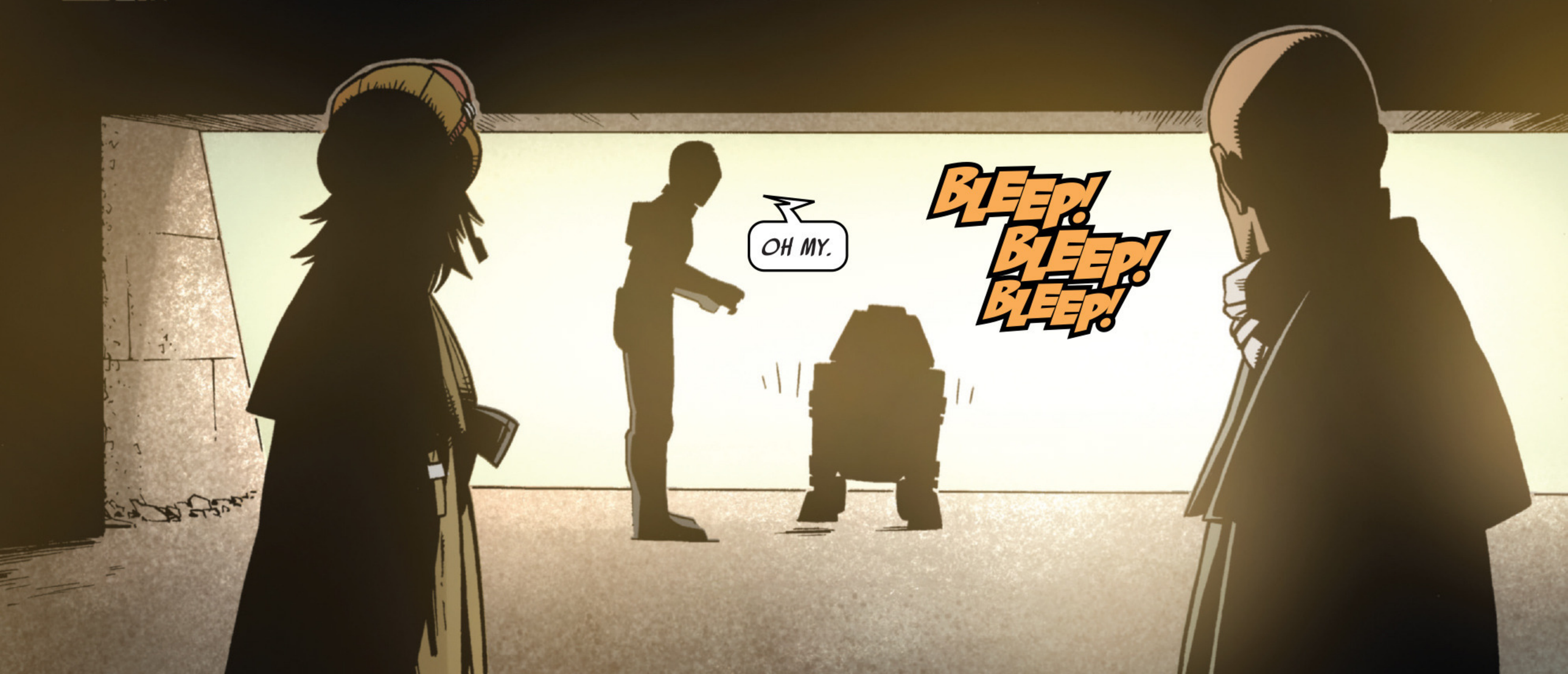
THERE... THERE...MUST BE SOMETHING I MISSED.
YES, THERE OBVIOUSLY WAS!

WHAT DID YOU MISS? WHERE TO START, DAD?!
YOUR WIFE FALLING OUT OF LOVE WITH YOU UNTIL SHE THOUGHT RUNNING AWAY TO THE OUTER RIM WAS A GOOD IDEA.

IF YOU LOVED LIVING PEOPLE HALF AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE DEAD THINGS, YOU'D PROBABLY BE THE BEST DAD IN THE WORLD.
MISS CHELLI LONA APHRA!
IT WASN'T LIKE THAT.

YES, IT WAS.
THAT WAS ANOTHER OF THE THINGS YOU MISSED.

AND ALL FOR NOTHING.
BLEEP! BLEEP!
HMM?


OH MY.
BLEEP! BLEEP! BLEEP!

YOU HAVE FIVE MORE SECONDS OF SMUG TIME, AND THEN WE HAVE TO RUN FOR OUR LIVES.

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."